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ABSTRACT

This booklet discuss five methods of handling disruptive behavior, including: (a) the teacher-dominant approach, (b) the analytic approach, (c) the behavioristic approach, (d) the student-centered approach, and (e) the teacher-student interaction approach. Application of the approaches is illustrated using an example of a classroom conflict that might develop into a serious case of disruptive behavior. Rewards and punishments are discussed, and group strategies such as group counseling, sociodrama, and group codes are presented. Discussions regarding classroom environment, curriculum, and teaching style are also included. A summary and a 104-item bibliography are included. (PD)

What Research Says to the Teacher

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Coping with Disruptive Behavior

by Jean E. Davis

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Quoted material included in this book may use the pronoun "he" to denote an abstract individual, e.g., "the student." We have not attempted to alter this material, although we currently use "she/he" in such instances.

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INTRODUCTION

Most students try to adapt their behavior to that of other students in the classroom. When a student's behavior forms a consistent pattern, she/he has established a status in the classroom and, therefore, has a definite role. Although individual students may try to fulfill certain needs through their classroom roles, in general their behavior is complementary to that of their peers. Research indicates that disruptive behavior tends to develop in the classroom when individual roles conflict with one other. (11) The conflicts occur more in student-student relationships than in teacher-student relationships, because the roles of students are more subject to change than are the relatively fixed roles of teachers in relation to students. This report reviews recent findings of research on various methods that teachers may use to modify, redirect, or otherwise influence disruptive behavior in order to maintain a classroom climate in which learning can take place.

METHODS OF HANDLING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

When a student disrupts activities in a classroom the teacher must focus attention on two objectives:

1. the immediate goal of restoring order to the classroom as quickly as possible
2. the long-range goal of preventing an isolated disruptive behavior from becoming a pattern, or of altering an established disruptive behavior to a more desirable pattern.

Research tells us that a teacher's approach to a situation involving disruptive classroom behavior depends largely upon her/his concept of the teacher's influence on the development of the student. (39) In general, teachers approach disruptive behavior in one of several ways closely related to

their beliefs about education. The commonly used approaches described below illustrate some general concepts of education.

The Teacher-Dominant Approach

Teachers who prefer this approach tend to believe that it is the responsibility of the teacher to impart information in an efficient manner by requiring students to accept and submit to the authority of a senior, more experienced person. These teachers often establish demanding rules of behavior for students to follow. They tolerate little deviation from the rules and provide a punishment for each infraction. Students can accept and succeed with this approach if they believe that the teacher is fair-minded, consistent, and not retributive in making demands and dealing out punishments. They must also believe that the teacher is wise in her/his judgements and worthy of their respect in the role of authoritarian. Research reveals the following:

- Although an orderly and quiet classroom may be maintained by the teacher-centered method, modern social commentators in general and educators in particular tend to reject this approach and the educational concept it implies. At best, they feel, it inhibits student creativity, and at worst, it tends to encourage a blind, unquestioning submission to authority which in some circumstances could lead to irresponsible behavior that might well endanger the welfare of a society which subscribes to a philosophy of democracy. (87)

- Social research indicates other dangers in this approach: Communicated feelings tend to produce similar feelings in others, although the immediate response may be passive and, hence, may not indicate a negative reaction. (72) Teachers who assume an authoritarian role often feel frustrated, inadequate, or inept when confronted with especially difficult disruptive behavior. They may react with

impatience, anger, or ridicule. Their negative feelings tend to produce negative feelings in students, which the students exhibit through more disruptive behavior (active) or through withdrawal or evasion (passive).

- Because a person's beliefs about others may serve as self-fulfilling prophecies, (81) if the teacher believes that students are naturally prone to disruptive behavior, she/he may actually will such behavior into existence, provoking it unconsciously.

The Analytic Approach

Teachers who follow this approach believe that every action is the effect of a given cause or group of causes and that disruptive behavior can be changed effectively only if its cause is identified and treated. These teachers attempt to analyze students and discuss their behavior with them. They examine each student's intelligence tests, social and psychological inventories, attendance records, medical records, and other cumulative records for insight into specific incidents or behavior patterns. They may discuss the student's behavior with her/his former teachers, with special school personnel, and with members of the student's family. Using whatever resources are available to them, they attempt to discover the causes of the disruptive behavior and to determine how to treat it.

Although this approach may have the humanizing effect of helping the teacher to know a student better, the analysis of disruptive incidents can consume a great deal of time and energy. Most teachers who practice this method find that they can focus only on incidents involving students who have a consistent pattern of disruptive behavior. They rarely have a chance for in-depth insights into those students who are not consistent troublemakers.

Research indicates that this approach may mislead the untrained observer:

- Students often exhibit different behavior patterns in different settings. Teachers need to keep in mind

that disruptive behavior in one setting does not necessarily mean similar behavior in other settings. They should examine the similarities and differences in environment, as well as the student's interaction in those environments. Teachers should also avoid trying to alter conditions in settings where they have no established role. Studies of the interaction of behavior and environment indicate that disruptive behavior can best be treated in the setting in which it occurs. (98)

- Parent-student relationships may be of little or no help in changing classroom behavior. Teachers have to be cautious about intruding into these relationships, because although they can gain knowledge that helps them understand the student, the intrusion may affect the teacher-student relationship adversely. (9)
- Behaviorists believe that disruptive behavior, like all other behavior, is learned as a means of adjustment to environment and that only by offering a choice of good or bad consequences can the disruptive behavior be altered. In general, therefore, behaviorists tend to reject the concept of disruptive behavior as a symptom that should be diagnosed so that its cause may be treated.

The Behavioristic Approach

Teachers who accept this approach tend to believe that behavior modification techniques can change a disruptive behavior to a more desirable behavior. They try to identify the specific disruptive behavior and set up specific performance objectives to attain the desired behavior. Then, in order to reinforce the desired behavior, they reward or commend the student for exhibiting it. At times they ignore disruptive behavior or remove the student from the situation in which it occurs. In rare instances a punishment, often mechanical or automatic, is used as a deterrent. In this view the causes of

disruptive behavior are held to be irrelevant. Research indicates the following:

- Much investigation strongly suggests that human behavior can be modified by the use of rewards and deterrents. In some instances people can be conditioned to respond to stimuli in specific ways, much as scientists have conditioned responses in some animals. (49)
- Some behavior modification techniques have seemed to have successful results when used in institutions for severely retarded and disturbed patients, and as remediative techniques for poor performers in schools. (6)
- On the other hand, studies indicate that disruptive behavior is sometimes a symptom of poor hearing, poor eyesight, or the beginning of physical or mental illness. The teacher is in a position to discover these abnormalities and to call them to the attention of those who can help the student to eliminate or to adjust to her/his physical or mental difficulties. In such cases, causes of disruptive behavior are not entirely irrelevant.
- Although behavior modification has many supporters, educators who believe that the environment should be manipulated to fit the child are violently opposed to this approach, which, they feel, manipulates the child to fit the environment. They question the morality of the approach and the authority of those who presume to know what the desirable behavior should be. They contend that changing personal characteristics by means of rewards leads to an artificial and unrealistic value system as the student matures. (47)

The Student-Centered Approach

Teachers who follow the student-centered approach generally believe that students must be given a maximum of freedom within the limits imposed by the school but with

little or no teacher intervention to inhibit them in the pursuit of their studies. In the view of these teachers, disruptive classroom behavior occurs when the classroom environment fails to provide material and/or opportunity for students to fulfill their natural interests at the stage of emotional and intellectual development they have reached.

In this approach the teacher tries to observe students to determine their stage of development, and make suitable educational materials available to them. Pleasant and convenient work areas stocked with attractive materials that can be introduced informally are maintained throughout the classroom. The teacher may try to fill the role of resource person, remaining as detached and inconspicuous as possible.

Research indicates that important developmental factors should be kept in view by those who favor this approach:

- In support of the student-centered classroom, there is ample evidence that human characteristics develop at specific stages of childhood and youth; that anything blocking the natural development of a characteristic may create immediate difficulty for the student with the possibility of resulting psychological problems. For example, specific speech problems are often cited as outcomes of attempts to block natural development. (54)
- On the other hand, many psychologists claim that children need to have limits set for their behavior if they are not to suffer mental-health problems later. This implies that the teachers who favor the student-centered approach must not leave students completely to their own devices. A pattern of behavior that is acceptable may be presented to students in a subtle and simple manner with the presentation of directions for the use of materials. Even in an unstructured situation the teacher acts as a role model whose behavior may be admired and imitated by some of the students in the classroom. (4)
- *Freedom* is a term often defined in a very subjective way. For this reason the concept of freedom is

frequently different for different people and different age groups. Freedom in a classroom can be dangerous if the activities of one student are allowed to infringe upon the rights and freedom of others. Under these circumstances only the strong or influential students possess what they believe to be freedom. Unassertive students may pay for the others' freedom with a sense of alienation, frustration, and ultimate lack of interest. (72)

- It is clear that many educators and psychologists consider the student-centered approach too permissive. (67) In this connection, B. F. Skinner, the well-known American behaviorist, believes that permissiveness is not a policy but an abandonment of policy. "To refuse to control is to leave control not to the person himself, but to other parts of the social and nonsocial environments." (85)

The Teacher-Student Interaction Approach

A number of teachers and psychologists have offered techniques for treating disruptive behavior that require teacher and student to interact with the utmost awareness to modify undesirable behavior. Such techniques feature structured discussions of behavior. Palardy and Mudrey's diagnostic technique, for example, offers a series of steps the teacher and student must take together to analyze causes of disruptive behavior, and prevent its occurence. (67)

This type of approach shares techniques with both the analytic and behavioristic approaches, and its advocates take the position that the teacher must at times engage in authoritarian behavior.

- The interaction method can be extremely supportive to those students who need a strengthening of self-image, because it can build their confidence in their own abilities to influence human relations in a positive way. It can also reduce their sense of anonymity in the school environment. (14)
- Those educators who subscribe to this approach see it as a realistic anticipation for students of the

adult-world in which they will have to interact with persons representing all types of authority or establishment positions, as well as with their peers. (67)

- Although interaction or cooperation of this type may be ideal for the permanent modification of disruptive behavior, both teacher and pupil must be flexible enough to work together in this way. Like analytical techniques, the interaction method takes time, and its use may force the teacher to concentrate on those students who demonstrate disruptive patterns rather than on the members of the class whose behavior does not cause problems. (87)

Although most educators lean toward one approach rather than another, they utilize techniques from all approaches at some time or other, together or separately. Sometimes a particular technique from one approach is used with another approach because a teacher has seen or heard or read that it was effective in a particular kind of situation. In some instances, teachers may use, or refrain from using, a particular approach because school directives dictate that they do so in specific types of situations. Research indicates that whatever disciplinary approach a teacher may use, she/he should feel comfortable with the approach and should be aware of the concept of education it implies. (16)

APPLICATION OF METHODS

Below is an example of a classroom conflict that might develop into a serious case of disruptive behavior. The disciplinary approaches described above could treat in the different ways the situation below:

> An intermediate class is working on individual projects for an exhibit that is to take place in a few days. At one point Arthur needs the glue which Maria has been using for 10 minutes. Arthur grabs it from her. In doing so, he

accidentally damages her project. Maria reacts with an outburst of anger, and a disruptive verbal exchange takes place.

The Teacher-Dominant Approach. The teacher will assert an authoritarian role by making a demand for quiet in the class. If the disruptive verbal exchange continues, she/he may repeat the demand in a loud, firm voice, possibly punctuated by the bang of a book on a desk, and a threat of punishment for both Arthur and Maria if they don't quiet down immediately. If the argument still continues, the teacher may approach the students and separate them, forcibly if necessary, then carry out the threatened punishment. If Arthur and Maria submit to the demand for quiet, the teacher will meet with them at a more convenient time in the day, possibly after school, to learn exactly what happened and to mete out additional punishments if they are deemed necessary.

The Analytic Approach. The teacher will quiet Arthur and Maria and listen to each one's side of the story about what happened. The teacher might give Arthur another bottle of glue and let him get back to his work, then examine Maria's project with her and help her repair the damage. If Arthur volunteers to help Maria, and Maria doesn't reject his help, the teacher might stay to help them or just move away and leave them alone. In either case the teacher will continue to observe both Arthur and Maria to determine whether the behavior that each of them exhibited indicates a cause that is temporary and transient or one that is symptomatic of a deeper disturbance. The teacher will then examine the records in order to determine whether Arthur's action was the result of a motor or visual difficulty and whether Maria's reaction was the result of frayed nerves brought on by lack of sleep or something else that was bothering her. Observation and informal discussions with both students may eliminate or substantiate the need for further inquiry.

The Behavioristic Approach. If a formal response to the incident seems required, the teacher may identify each undesirable behavior:

Arthur: Demonstrates aggressive behavior by grabbing what he wants without considering that someone else may be using it.

Maria: Demonstrates disruptive behavior when something goes wrong by angry verbal outbursts.

The desirable behavior objectives will then be identified:

Arthur: Demonstrates self-control by first looking to see if others are using an item that he wants and, if they are, asking them if he may use it.

Maria: Demonstrates self-control when something goes wrong by looking to see exactly what happened and what can be done about it.

Finally, the teacher will make a point of commending each student whenever the desirable behavior is demonstrated. The teacher may also provide a chart on which the desirable behavior can be recorded and provide a reward (usually something that the student suggests) when a given point is reached on the chart or a given number of points has been recorded.

If a less formal handling seems desirable, the teacher calmly intervenes and calls the attention of Arthur and Maria to the fact that they are disturbing the rest of the students. Then as quietly as possible and without exhibiting any emotion, the teacher helps them to explain the problem, to define their own individual contributions to it, to describe a more acceptable behavior each of them should exhibit in future circumstances of this type, and to arrive at some mutually acceptable means of attaining the desirable behavior. Over the next few days the teacher will attempt to reward the desired behavior with praise for each of the students whenever they work together or with other students without altercations.

The Student-Centered Approach. The teacher will ignore the verbal exchange and wait to see if it stops by itself. If it quiets down, no remark will be made about the incident, and it will be assumed that the distrubance did not require intervention. If the argument appears to be reaching a stage

in which blows will be exchanged, the teacher will tell the more aggressive student to go to a quiet corner of the room or to a specially designated "cooling off" place until the student can calm down. If moderate intervention seems necessary, the teacher will step up to the student to guide her/him away from the scene of the altercation. Later, the teacher may confer with both Arthur and Maria, if it appears that they have established a disruptive pattern of behavior toward each other. In some instances the teacher will help each of them identify what they did that was undesirable, what they should have done that would have been more desirable, and to provide a supportive structure for a change in behavior.

Ideally, Arthur will see that the fairest thing for him to do is to offer to help Maria repair the damage to her project. Once Maria's anger has diminished, she may accept Arthur's help or thank him and do it herself. As a strong sign of congeniality, Arthur and Maria might decide to work together to complete both their projects.

The Teacher-Student Interaction Approach. Having concentrated on prevention the teacher will intervene in the disturbance at once, working with the students separately to discuss the altercation, the emotions involved, what aspects of the classroom environment may have contributed to the incident (crowding, limited supplies), what the continuance of such behavior implies, alternative ways of preventing future disruptions, etc. The teacher accepts the responsibility of working with Arthur and Maria to modify the conditions that may have contributed to the disruption, helping them alter their reactions while trying to adjust the environmental causes of the incident.

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

Several strategies that are used in the major approaches to discipline have proven successful when used in an informal way or outside a tightly defined philosophical structure. Rewards and punishments, for example, may be used in various combinations even though the teacher may not subscribe to either the behaviorist or the authoritarian approach.

Not all educators view reward and punishment as opposite facets of the same technique. The use of each is a strategy in its own right. Teachers who make extensive use of one strategy have a tendency to avoid or minimize the use of the other. Historically at different times each strategy has been promoted enthusiastically and denounced violently by educators. (52) Educators have recommended the use of such rewards as marks, gummed stars or pictures, prizes including food, and special privileges as a means of motivating students to a desired goal in both achievement and behavior. At the same time other educators have attacked rewards as bribes and have stated that achievement is in itself a reward, the only acceptable one for the student. At one time educators cautioned, "Spare the rod and spoil the child"; at another time educators rejected punishment as a possible cause of deep-seated psychological problems in students. Today there are educators who support the bestowal of both rewards and punishments as strategies, but their definitions of these terms and their applications of them to the classroom situation often differ.

Rewards

The teachers who follow the behavioristic approach usually advocate the use of rewards. They describe a reward as a stimulus toward a desirable behavior by a student. These teachers provide rewards as positive reinforcements of desirable behavior. (49) Most teachers, in one way or another, offer some kind of rewards to students--even if they do not subscribe to a philosophy of rewarding desirable behavior.

Research suggests that the most effective rewards take a nonmaterial form, providing the students with a sense of affection, approval, independence, self-esteem or self-fulfillment in a way that is appropriate to the individual student. (83) Before presenting rewards the teacher must know the class well enough to recognize what each student will be most postively responsive to. The consequences of a behavior should seem worthwhile or meaningful to the student. It is also most effective to have the rewards immediately follow the behavior; rewards are probably ineffectual if they are delayed too long.

The teacher may reward desirable behavior by a "thank you" for acts of courtesy, by other verbal praise, by signals such as a nod of the head or a smile, by a pat on the shoulder, by extending to the student special leisure time or special privileges or responsibilities, by providing an opportunity for the student to demonstrate her/his talents or to share special interests with other students, by permitting the student to participate in a project outside the classroom, or by awarding the student a choice of objects such as candy, fruit, special school supplies, games, books, or toys. The teacher also may have the student select her/his own reward, possibly by suggesting alternatives from which a choice may be made.

Teachers should be aware that rewards must be geared to the developmental stage of the students. A reward that is appropriate for a student of six would, of course, be inappropriate for a student of sixteen. (37) For example, a teacher might hug a six-year old to show approval, but such physical display toward a sixteen-year-old would be considered unacceptable by the student, as well as by the community.

Punishments

Teachers who support the teacher-dominant approach to discipline are, of course, the strongest advocates of punishment as a strategy, but many other teachers, including the behaviorists, also use forms of punishment. Since the word *punishment* has a variety of meanings and functions, it is one of the most confusing and controversial terms in education.

Punishment can mean physical (corporal) or mental pain or discomfort consciously inflicted. Inflicted punishment with its corresponding threats and evocation of fear is often referred to as a *punitive* measure. Inflicted punishment may be called *retributive* if it involves paying the student back for disruptive behavior. *Restitution* also is sometimes referred to as punishment but there is substantial difference between inflicting punishment and demanding restitution since "making amends" offers a definite gratification or reward to the pupil. *Unrewarded behavior*, although the term appears to be the opposite of rewarded behavior, is not punishment. Unrewarded behavior involves the withholding of a reward or gratification.

GROUP STRATEGIES

A number of strategies requiring group participation by students have been successful in modifying disruptive behavior. In these activities, students are given opportunities to become aware of their behavior patterns, the implications of these patterns for the classroom and the larger communities, and the possibilities of changing disruptive behavior to more constructive ones.

Group Counseling

Gumaer and Myrick's report on behavior group counseling stresses the advantages of group discussions on selected topics related to disruptive behavior and discipline techniques. (26) Such counseling is particularly effective in those situations in which disruptive students are referred by the classroom teacher to a school counselor. Behavior modification techniques, including postive reinforcement of desirable behavior with rewards of M&M's, centers on verbal analysis of problem behavior and its consequences. Participants tend to grow in ability to control undesirable behavior as they become more aware of its causes through analysis.

Sociodrama: Role Playing as a Discipline Strategy

Sociodrama is the "re-creation of a dilemma in human relations through a spontaneous and faithful enactment of the roles with the accompanying feelings involved in the situation." (104) This kind of role enactment can be helpful in dealing with classroom misbehavior by calling attention to desirable and undesirable behavior in a variety of situations, by helping students note the effect of various behaviors upon others, and encouraging discussion of various ways of changing undesirable behavior.

According to Zeleny's view there are three major types of sociodrama: the life problem (focusing on personal role conflicts that students have or might have been involved with), the problem story (focusing on fictional role conflicts), and the social issue (focusing on roles in history and in current events). The sociodrama may be performed by stu-

dents directly or through some mechanism such as puppets. The students should be permitted to choose their own method of role enactment.

The teacher might introduce a situation involving a conflict by means of a picture that graphically illustrates a conflict. For example, the picture might show a group of girls and boys in a yard playing ball; one of the young people has accidentally driven the ball through the window of the house next door; an angry adult is at the window of the house and is apparently yelling something at the youngsters. The teacher might select a conflict from a piece of fiction, create a fictionalized conflict or have the students create one that focuses on a specific kind of behavior. Once a situation involving a conflict has been introduced, the teacher would encourage the students to identify and discuss the roles, the feelings, and the actions of the people in these roles, as well as the reactions of others to these roles.

Establishing Group Codes

There is evidence that establishment of a behavior code by the classroom group may be an effective deterrent to disruptive behavior. (33) In this process, the teacher might initiate a discussion with a positive question such as "What kind of classroom behavior makes work easier and more enjoyable to do?" Later, she/he might ask the negative question: "What kind of classroom behavior annoys you when you are working?" The teacher would exhibit interest and respect for each student's behavior and, in a friendly way, accept any suggestions that appear to be directed at her/his own behavior.

The students might be encouraged to compose in as few words as possible a few simple guidelines for classroom behavior. The resultant behavior code or codes can be posted. It is recommended that teachers avoid labeling this code as rules that involve punishments for infractions.

At various times throughout the school term, the students might review their codes and discuss how classroom behavior has improved or deteriorated. At that time the code might be revised to reflect the changes in classroom behavior. As Alvin Howard says:

. . .no group of people can work together successfully without establishing standards of behavior, mutual respect, and a desirable system of values that leads each person in the group to develop self-control and self-direction. (33)

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Research shows that the organization of the classroom may affect students in a beneficial or an adverse way. (98) A gloomy, barren, messy room may help create negative feelings that result in disruptive behavior. If the students have to search for materials to use or discover that the materials are dirty or damaged, they are apt to lose interest in them and resort to disruptive behavior. Both teachers and students should participate in planning and maintaining a cheerful and orderly, work-oriented classroom.

There should be many things in the classroom that interest the students and encourage them to become involved in educational experiences. Bulletin boards and tables may be used for attractive displays that relate to a specific area of study, to an important current event, historical event or personage, or to some personal experiences of the students. Students' work, books and other educational materials, schedules, and school news items should also be readily accessible. These displays are only useful so long as they interest the student and are relevant to the class.

There should be areas of the room set aside for specific purposes where materials needed for a particular type of work are stored and easily available to the students. These work areas may vary and may include tables for painting, locations for independent reading or for scientific exploration and study. More specialized areas such as resource centers for biographical data, for microscopic explorations, for computing data, for viewing films, or for auditing tapes and records may also be available. In each of these areas, there should be a designated place for everything, and materials should be replaced after they have been used.

After a classroom environment has been established that promotes learning, then discussion about desirable and undesirable forms of classroom behavior is possible and probably will help prevent future disruption.

CURRICULUM

A well-planned curriculum implemented by a well-prepared teacher who presents a study topic so that it holds the interest of the students has traditionally been considered a deterrent to disruptive classroom behavior. (92) Studies of disruptive behavior indicate that:

- A curriculum that is meaningful to students helps to prevent or reduce the number of cases of disruptive behavior. (92)
- Disruptive behavior is directly related to the teacher's preparation, motivation, and presentation. (22)
- There is a correlation between vulnerability to disruptive behavior and failure in educational achievement. (21)
- Students tend to have a strong respect for demonstrated competence and technical resources of teachers, regardless of their role or characteristics. (37)

The curriculum should relate to the present interests of students so that they can understand the use of what they are learning. Relating learning situations to the social realities which surround the students requires careful planning and preparation of the subject matter. It requires understanding of both students and subject content. The teacher whose preparation utilizes all available materials, including equipment and audiovisual aids, increases the chances of interesting all the students in the subject matter. If the teacher is able to develop enthusiasm for the content being studied, her/his own enthusiasm tends to create enthusiasm for the subject in students. (48)

The curriculum should also relate to the individual needs and differences of the students. (82) Once again, a variety of materials and media helps since different students have different degrees of learning success with the visual, auditory, and tactile senses. The level of the subject material should also be geared to the level of development of individ-

ual students. Teachers should not only consider the level of the concept they are presenting but also the level of the presentation. "Kid stuff" offends a student's sense of maturity and a presentation that is over a student's head may well be boring. The teacher should also keep in mind that although repetition may be desirable for a slow learner, a gifted student has a low tolerance for repetition.

The teacher's initial preparation should begin with a knowledge of the objectives of the total program of education that the school, the school district, and the state department of education have established. She/he should have a good idea of how to sequence and space these objectives throughout the school term. Most state or school district curriculum guides either provide this structure or help the teacher determine it. Planning and preparation of schedules can reduce the teacher's tensions regarding accountability to the school district for the educational program.

Teaching Style

Everything that a teacher does in a classroom has philosophical overtones, and a teacher projects a philosophy of life as well as a philosophy of education. (37) Therefore, it is important that the teacher have enough self-awareness to recognize her/his philosophies and how they are projected.

- Research evidence indicates that a person in a new situation changes social behavior or role enactment before attitudes. Teachers can only change their attitudes by changing their patterns of behavior or their teaching style. (87)
- Research studies also indicate that both structure and discipline and lack of structure and freedom can have positive effects on young children. On the basis of these findings, elementary teachers can feel free to follow either a highly structured or a loosely structured approach to teaching. There is little evidence to suggest that there is an optimum approach for high school teachers so it seems that they, too, may follow either approach and be successful. (42)

- It is clear from research that teaching styles vary and that teachers are more comfortable and more efficient if they can use a curriculum and an approach that fits their styles. (82)

Teaching styles vary with the various personality characteristics of teachers. Style or behavior patterns depend more upon characteristics of a teacher's personality than upon the curriculum or the philosophy of education inherent in it. (64) A teacher's natural style tends to lend itself more to one type of curriculum and approach than to another, and teachers, therefore, should try to match their personalities to a curriculum and an approach that suits them or with which they feel comfortable. Again, it is important that a teacher have enough self-awareness to recognize personality strengths and weaknesses and attempt to change those characteristics that hamper effective communication with students.

Research indicates that teachers can gain valuable insights into their own styles by viewing their teaching on videotape or film. (16) Now and again teachers might use a tape recorder to record part of the activities of a day so that they can become aware of some of the characteristics of their teaching styles. An evaluation of the recording might follow along these lines:

1. Does your voice sound interesting? Is it too loud or too soft? Does it register variation in pitch and volume or is it flat? Are the words distinct and easily understood?
2. Are you satisfied with your way of expressing ideas? Is there evidence of speech habits, such as "I mean" or "uh" that would be better eliminated? Are the statements precise and comprehensive? Did you say what you meant to say? Did you speak with enthusiasm or boredom?
3. Are you satisfied with your interactions with students? Is there evidence of emotional reactions to students? Do your prejudices show? Do you appear to have favorites or students you dislike? Did you

respond with interest to a student's questions or comments? Did you say something that you wished you had said differently or in a different tone of voice? Do your attitudes seem to foster an open or a disruptive atmosphere?

SUMMARY

Disruptive classroom behavior results when there are conflicts in the roles assumed by students in the classroom. The teacher tries first to restore order and then either to prevent a behavior from stabilizing into a pattern or to alter an established behavior pattern to a more desirable one.

Rewards are often used outside a given discipline structure to reinforce a desirable behavior. To be most effective, rewards should be geared to the developmental stage and needs of individual students and should provide the student with affection, approval, independence, self-esteem or self-fulfillment.

Punishments usually refer to such measures as inflicting physical (corporal) or mental pain or discomfort and include the threat and fear of these inflictions.

Group strategies such as group therapy, sociodrama, and group determination of behavior codes are often effective in modifying or deterring disruptive behavior.

Sociodramas, spontaneous recreations of dilemmas in human relations, can be particularly useful in calling students' attention to disruptive behavior and to the influence this behavior has upon others.

Classroom environment, curriculum, and teaching style are all important in preventing disruptive classroom behavior. The curriculum should be well planned so that the students can understand the relation of what they are learning to their daily lives. It should also reflect a regard for the individual needs and differences of the students. The classroom should be organized to make work as simple, as interesting, as convenient, and as pleasant as possible. The teacher's style or pattern of behavior must complement the pattern of behavior of the students.

Although there is considerable confusion and controversy about the necessity for discipline and the various ap-

proaches to it, every teacher must use those strategies, no matter what philosophy they suggest, that are most effective for helping students acquire knowledge and interact comfortably.

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